

## GENERAL SAFETY FY2006

If you have questions regarding General Safety or Disaster Preparedness, call Mr. Curtis Snyder at extension 70236 or Mr. Darrell Brewer 903-943-0038 or you may send them a mailman message. General Safety questions or concerns at the Consolidated Mail Out Pharmacy (CMOP) or Ft. Worth may be directed to Mr. Snyder or Mr. Brewer at the extensions noted above.

- 1) Safety of employees and everyone in VANTHCS should be the concern of all employees. Anything that appears to be unsafe should be reported to a supervisor or to the Safety Officer in Safety/Consumer Affairs 70513. Safe work habits are also important, and all employees should help to see that proper instruction is obtained when unsafe habits are noticed. Good tips to remember: report slick floors or clean them if the spill is not infectious; use proper lifting techniques and get help for heavy objects; open one drawer of a filing cabinet at a time; use proper posture at computer workstations and ensure station is set up right for you; report broken floor tiles or items hanging from the ceiling; report all Employee/visitor accidents properly; know where the Safety Manual for your work area is so you can locate policies as needed.
- 2) The VANTHCS has a written disaster plan that describes actions to be taken in the event of a disaster. There is a plan located in each work area. Your supervisor can explain the role that you and your department are expected to take in a disaster.
- 3) A disaster can be either internal, external or both. Disasters can place an increased burden on the VA North Texas Health Care System's (VANTHCS) ability to provide care and services to those in need. An example of an internal disaster is a fire inside a building. An external disaster might be a wreck on the interstate involving a large number of injuries. Many of the injured might come into the medical center for treatment, increasing workload. An example of a disaster that would be considered both internal and external is a tornado that damages the medical center. In a tornado, there might be a large number of people coming in with injuries; in addition, if the building were damaged it would be difficult for us to care for those injured and for those patients already in the hospital. Being prepared for a disaster enables the medical center to provide first aid and minimize loss of life.
- 4) Implementing a disaster drill is one way that we can help to insure that we are prepared when a disaster occurs. The drill provides us the opportunity to practice our written disaster plan. We are required to have a disaster drill at least twice a year. Every employee has a role in

the disaster drill. Sometimes that role might be to continue performing your regular job; other times you may be called upon to go to another area and provide a service that you do not normally do, such as transport patients from one location to another. You will not be asked to do something that you are not qualified to do. Your supervisor can tell you what your role in a disaster drill will most likely be.

- 5) A disaster can happen at any time. If you are involved in a disaster, it is important that you remain calm and protect yourself from injury so that you will be able to help others later. You should know you're expected role, the evacuation plan for your area, and who you are expected to take instructions from in a disaster.
- 6) If a tornado warning is given, you should move away from glass windows and doors. Do not panic and remain calm. Every effort should be made to protect the patients from any potential injury. Nursing Service is primarily responsible for patient evacuation during disasters and may solicit assistance from others.
- 7) In the event that you receive a bomb threat you should remain calm, take the threat seriously and try to determine any information (background noise) that may identify the sender. You should ask for the location of the bomb, type of device and the time that it is set to detonate. Try to obtain a telephone number for contacting the sender.